

montana public health association



1118 Hobson • Butte, MT 59701

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2.9.07
HB 465

February 7, 2007

The Honorable Rick Jore
Chairman, House Education Committee
Montana House of Representatives
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Opposition to HB 465 – Revise medical and religious exemptions for immunization

Dear Chairman Jore and Members of the House Education Committee:

The Montana Public Health Association (MPHA) strongly opposes passage of HB 465, the Act to revise medical and religious exemptions for immunization. Passage of HB 465 would unnecessarily spread infectious disease, and potentially cause death among Montana's infant daycare population. Please consider the following:

- ♦ Children in daycare who were exempted from immunizations could contract disease, which in itself is serious enough. They then could infect infants in that daycare, causing disease in those infants.
- ♦ Infants under a certain age either cannot receive immunizations or haven't yet received the full course of immunizations, leaving them vulnerable to disease if exposed to that illness.
- ♦ Infants will get sick from other sick children, or contagious but not yet sick children, in the same daycare whose parents have exempted them from immunizations.

A strong public health system that protects Montanans includes sound preventive measures such as immunization. HB 465 would erode that protection and cost lives. We respectfully encourage you to support good public health practice and vote against HB 465.

The Montana Public Health Association (MPHA) is a diverse membership of individuals and organizations advocating for optimal public health best practice standards for all Montanans. MPHA facilitates educational and professional growth opportunities, networking and mentoring, and collaborative relationships for members and partners. MPHA joins with other organizations on specific issues to strengthen the voice of public health and advance legislation to support the people of Montana.

Thank you for your consideration of MPHA's vehement opposition to HB 465. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lora Wier, MPHA Past President, MPHA Advocacy Committee Chair, at (406) 466-2562 or health@3rivers.net, or visit the MPHA website at www.mtpha.com

Sincerely,

Terri Hocking
Terri Hocking, President

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